

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 155344 TOSEC 050065

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ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

DRAFTED BY EA:WHGLEESTEEN,JR.:AVM

APPROVED BY EA:PCHABIB

S/P - MR.LORD

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TO USDEL SECRETARY IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 155344 TOSEC 050065

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CHEROKEE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CH, TW, US

SUBJECT: ACTION MEMORANDUM - GEORGE BUSH'S CONVERSATIONS
WITH PROFESSOR C.P. LI IN PEKING ABOUT TAIWAN SETTLEMENT
(S/S NO.7513278)

FOR THE SECRETARY FROM HABIB AND LORD

1. THE PROBLEM

C.P. LI, THE RETIRED NIH EMPLOYEE WHO WAS HONORED BY A
MEETING WITH CHOU EN-LAI, IS AN AVOWED PROMOTER OF A TAIWAN
SETTLEMENT, AND WE BELIEVE HIS COMMENTS TO GEORGE BUSH
SHOULD BE CAREFULLY VIEWED IN LIGHT OF THIS IMPULSE WHICH
MOTIVATES MANY OTHER CHINESE OF SIMILAR BACKGROUND. THE
REPORTING CABLES ARE SOMEWHAT AMBIGUOUS ABOUT WHO SAID
WHAT TO WHOM. HOWEVER, LI SEEMS TO HAVE CONVEYED TWO
MESSAGES TO BUSH: (A) HE SAID THAT VICE FOREIGN MINISTER

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 STATE 155344 TOSEC 050065

WANG HAI JUNG ANDNANCYTANG, WHILE REPEATING THE STANDARD

PRC CONDITIONS ON TAIWAN, MADE CLEAR THAT PRESIDENT FORD WOULD BE WELCOME IN PEKING REGARDLESS OF PROGRESS ON THE TAIWAN QUESTION, AND (B) LI ASKED BUSH IF THE U.S. WOULD BE SATISFIED, IN RETURN FOR MEETING THE PRC'S THREE CONDITIONS, WITH A PRC STATEMENT "FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION" DECLARING THE PRC'S INTENTION TO USE ONLY PEACEFUL MEANS TO REUNITE

WITH TAIWAN. LI DID NOT ATTRIBUTE THIS IDEA TO CHOU EN-LAI BUT SAID HE THOUGHT THAT CHOU "PROBABLY" FAVORED IT. HE OFFERED NO JUSTIFICATION FOR HIS ASSUMPTION. NOR DID HE SPELL OUT THE REMAINING CONTEXT FOR SUCH A PRC STATEMENT. LI HIMSELF SEEMS TO ASSUME, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT TAIWAN WOULD BECOME AN AUTONOMOUS PROVINCE OF CHINA, A DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD GO CONSIDERABLY BEYOND THE "JAPANESE MODEL."

2. ANALYSIS

WE DO NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT CHOU EN-LAI DELIBERATELY PLAYED UP THE LI VISIT TO SIGNAL THE PRC'S -- AND HIS PERSONAL -- DESIRE TO MOVE ALONG WITH PREPARATIONS FOR THE PRESIDENT'S VISIT TO CHINA LATER THIS YEAR. USING A PERSON OUTSIDE THE DIRECT CIRCUIT AND CONVEYING SYMBOLIC MESSAGES IS, AS YOU KNOW, CONSISTENT WITH CHOU'S STYLE. MOREOVER, THE MESSAGE OF WELCOME TO PRESIDENT FORD REGARDLESS OF PROGRESS ON TAIWAN ECHOES TENG HSIAO-PING'S JUNE 2 REMARKS AND SIMILAR SIGNALS FROM OTHER QUARTERS. CLEARLY, THE CHINESE WANT A PRESIDENTIAL VISIT; AND THEY ARE SUFFICIENTLY ANXIOUS ABOUT IT TO HAVE MOUNTED A MODEST CAMPAIGN TO KEEP IT ON THE PRESIDENT'S AGENDA. IN THE PROCESS, THEY MAY HAVE LOST A BIT OF NEGOTIATING LEVERAGE BY INDICATING PUBLICLY AND PRIVATELY THAT THEY COULD LIVE WITH A RESULT SHORT OF FULL NORMALIZATION.

3. LI'S STATEMENT ABOUT PEACEFUL UNIFICATION IS HARDER TO ASSESS. IT COULD WELL BE SIMPLY LI'S OWN IDEA WHICH THE CHINESE HAVE CHOSEN NOT TO CONTRADICT. BUT IT COULD ALSO BE AN INDIRECT INDICATION OF THE PRC'S MINIMUM WAY OF MEETING OUR PROBLEM. DEPENDING ON THE TIMING,

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 STATE 155344 TOSEC 050065

EXACT LANGUAGE, AND CONTEXT, SUCH A STATEMENT WOULD BE WORTH EXPLORING WITH OTHER ELEMENTS OF A NORMALIZATION PACKAGE.

4. ALTHOUGH WE MAY WISH AT SOME POINT TO DRAW ON LI'S APPROACH, WE DO NOT FAVOR RESPONDING DIRECTLY TO HIM OR OTHERWISE ENGAGING HIM IN HIS WOULD-BE INTERMEDIARY ROLE. EVEN IF CHOU WITTINGLY CONVEYED A SPECIAL

MESSAGE THROUGH LI, CHOU WOULD NOT EXPECT US TO DISCUSS
A CRUCIAL ELEMENT OF THE NORMALIZATION PACKAGE WITH A
THIRD PARTY. HE WOULD EXPECT YOU TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE
WITH HIM, TENG, OR CHIAO KUAN-HUA. AS WE MENTIONED TO
YOU THE OTHER DAY, WE HAVE A PAPER WHICH WILL BE READY
IMMEDIATELY ON YOUR RETURN, ANALYZING WHERE WE STAND ON
RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND DISCUSSING POSSIBLE SCENARIOS
FOR THE REST OF THE YEAR. C.P. LI'S COMMENTS TO BUSH

SHOULD, WE THINK, BE VIEWED IN THIS BROADER CONTEXT.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS:

1) THAT WE INFORM BUSH TO TAKE NO FURTHER INITIATIVE
IN ANY CONTACTS WITH LI AND IF LI ASKS ABOUT THE USG'S
REACTION TO HIS REMARKS, THAT BUSH SIMPLY REPEAT THAT
HE HAS REPORTED THEM TO WASHINGTON.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

2) THAT AFTER READING OUR NEW CHINA PAPER YOU CONVENE
A MEETING WITH US FOR A GENERAL DISCUSSION ON CHINA.

APPROVE DISAPPROVE

5. CLEARED: NSC - SOLOMON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TOSEC, FOREIGN RELATIONS, CHIEF OF STATE VISITS, CAT-C, CHEROKEE 07/02/75
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 JUL 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE155344
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: WHGLEYSTEEEN,JR.:AVM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: P850061-1795
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750794/aaaadghc.tel
Line Count: 143
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 25 SEP 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <25 SEP 2003 by SmithRJ>; APPROVED <27 OCT 2003 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: ACTION MEMORANDUM - GEORGE BUSH'S CONVERSATIONS WITH PROFESSOR C.P. LI IN PEKING ABOUT TAIWAN SETTLEMENT
TAGS: PFOR, PREL, CH, TW, US, (FORD, GERALD R), (BUSH, GEORGE), (LI, C P)
To: SECRETARY
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006